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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001576

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL SOCI PHUM CG

SUBJECT: ANTI-TUTSI PREJUDICE RISES

Classified By: Poloff Meghan Moore for Reasons 1.5 B and D

¶11. (C) Summary: On August 16, moderate Banyamulenge community leader Enock Ruberangabo Sebineza told us that he was concerned about increased anti-Rwandan/ Banyamulenge sentiments in Kinshasa and eastern DRC. Many Congolese are again becoming increasingly hostile towards Rwanda, Ruberwa and the RCD/G, bringing back to the fore long-held perceptions of all Tutsis as Rwandan, and international community support of Rwandan interests over those of the Congo. On August 19, PPRD Secretary General Vital Kamerhe gave a press conference in Kinshasa PPRD condemning the Gatumba massacre, and offering the PPRD's condolences to the families of the victims. Most of his prepared remarks were relatively innocuous, but Kamerhe made a number of pointed jabs at Ruberwa and the RCD/G, Rwanda, and Burundi. End summary.

Anti-Tutsi Sentiment Uptick

¶12. (C) Over the past several weeks, Post has noticed an uptick in anti-Tutsi and anti-Rwanda rhetoric in eastern DRC and Kinshasa. On August 16, two moderate Congolese told two poloffs that Ruberwa, who they claimed was clearly Rwandan, had planned the Gatumba massacre. The same day, moderate Banyamulenge community leader Enock Ruberangabo Sebineza told polcouns and poloff that he was concerned about increased anti-Rwandan/ Banyamulenge sentiments in Kinshasa and eastern DRC and found a 'discourse of hate' during his recent trip to ¶15. Kivu with the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. He said that Nkunda and Mutebusi's actions had poisoned average Congolese against most Tutsis who are now seen as Rwandan. Ruberangabo opined that any Rwandan intervention in the Congo could have disastrous consequences for the Banyamulenge and possibly other Congolese Rwandaphones. (Note: 'Rwandaphones' are Congolese residents and/or citizens (both Tutsi and Hutu) who speak Kinyarwanda. Banyamulenge refers to a specific group of Tutsis from S. Kivu. Most non-Rwandaphone Congolese, however, regularly lump all Tutsis together as Banyamulenge---without factoring in whether they are from N. or S. Kivu, and whether or not they are long-term residents or recent refugees. End note.)

¶13. (C) Speaking of Kinshasa, pol assistant said that many people are tired of the international community's support for the RCD/G, Ruberwa, and the Banyamulenge, who are only one of several hundred minority groups in the Congo and are already disproportionately represented within the transitional government. He said people are sad that 160 people were massacred at Gatumba, but many are mad that the international community only seems to care about the death of 160 Banyamulenge and does not care about the death of 3.5 million Congolese, mostly non-Tutsi. Poloff said that moderate participants at a National Democratic Institute conference on nationality were booed on August 19.

PPRD Secretary General's Rant

¶14. (SBU) On August 19, PPRD Secretary General Vital Kamerhe gave a press conference attended mostly by PPRD loyalists at the Kinshasa PPRD headquarters condemning the Gatumba massacre, and offering the PPRD's condolences to the families of the victims. He criticized locally organized periods of mourning for the victims, saying that only the transition government has the right to declare such a commemoration. (Note: This was a slam at Ruberwa who organized a commemoration and a period of mourning in Goma. End note.) Kamerhe also said that the PPRD had told its members to pray for two days to 'save the transition' and prevent future massacres.

¶15. (SBU) Most of his prepared remarks were relatively innocuous, but Kamerhe made a number of pointed jabs at Ruberwa and the RCD/G, Rwanda, and Burundi. Kamerhe severely criticized Ruberwa for saying that Mai Mai were involved in the Gatumba massacre, and rhetorically asked if a vice president should blame his own country. He condemned press statements by certain politicians who repeated Rwandan and Burundian views that the Congolese are a genocidal people and said no one has the right to use this tragedy for political purposes or to justify another aggression against the DRC. Kamerhe said he knows there is a plan to transplant Rwanda and Burundi's ethnic conflict to the Congo, and the PPRD is

convinced that a neighboring country has planned a third war which will be started by Congolese who will be used to kill other Congolese and facilitate the annexation of a part of the Congo. He invited churches, civil society, the government and political parties to refrain from adding fuel to the fire by accusing the innocent and peaceful people of the Congo and colluding with the nation's enemies for the sole purpose of accessing power. He opined that history will judge and the people will not forgive these acts of high treason. (Comment: The unnamed politician is clearly Ruberwa and the unnamed neighbor is clearly Rwanda. In addition, his invitation to refrain from adding fuel to the fire is a very pointed attack on Ruberwa and the RCD/G. End comment.) On August 20, pol assistant told polcouns that most Kinshasa residents agreed with Kamerhe's statement.

Fueling the Fire

16. (C) Despite the August 14 arrest of Pastor Ngoy, a notorious tele-evangelist who has incited hatred against Banyamulenge in the past, pro-government press in Kinshasa, notably RTNC radio and the newspaper L'Avenir have recently broadcast and published a number of inflammatory items. L'Avenir has run a series of vicious anti-Ruberwa and anti-Tutsi articles and editorials claiming that the term Congolese Tutsi is part of an ideology of victimization which causes ethnic hatred when the term is used, accusing Ruberwa of being Nkunda's accomplice, and suggesting that Ruberwa knew the Gatumba massacre would happen and made sure he was in eastern Congo when it happened. During an August 19 evening broadcast, RTNC2 Radio claimed that there was a Tutsi conspiracy underway to create a Tutsi-led republic in the eastern Congo and encouraged listeners to express their anger against Congolese Tutsis.

Comment

17. (C) Anti-Rwandan sentiment has long been very strong in the DRC. Recent events, including talk from Kigali and Bujumbura of the possibility of new cross-border unilateral military action, dredges up the latent hostility. Feelings are also widespread that much of the international community, and specifically the United States, are willing to overlook invasions and other provocation coming from Kigali out of guilt over the 1994 genocide. Opportunistic hard-line politicians such as Kamerhe or Pastor Ngoy find it relatively easy to inflame further these emotions. A number of Banyamulenge and other Congolese Tutsi leaders have always felt themselves particularly vulnerable during periods of heightened tension, caught at times between Rwandan and/or Burundian policies with which they often do not necessarily support and deep mistrust or hostility from other segments of the Congolese population. The trick is to keep public rhetoric toned down as much as possible from all quarters to avoid another spiral of fear and potential violence.

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